

salmon on airplanes. Maybe that \$74.5 million will be used to paint vegetables on airplanes or maybe a pretty flower.

Upon closer reading of the legislative language, I notice that the bill actually creates a \$100 million program for specialty crops. In addition to the \$74.5 million that this amendment addresses, it provides for \$25.5 million to make grants to "the several States, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to be used to support activities that promote agriculture."

I would like to repeat that for my colleagues: "\$25.5 million to make grants to the several States, the District of Columbia. . . ."

I admire and respect the District of Columbia enormously. I know of no agricultural enterprise—well, maybe an illegal one, but I never knew of an agricultural enterprise in the District of Columbia. But they are going to be eligible for grants to be used to "support activities that promote agriculture." As I say, I am not making this up.

I hope the sponsors of the legislation will correct me if I am wrong. I would like to be corrected if I am wrong. I am confident they will. But it appears that with respect to the \$25.5 million funding, the bill provides that all 50 States will each receive \$500,000 of that money, while Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia each will receive \$250,000. What specialty crops are grown in the District of Columbia? What specialty crops are grown here? What kind of campaign should we expect?

The funding is not needed. It should be noted that, according to OMB, "In 2005, many crops had record or near record production, and the U.S. farm sector cash receipts were second highest ever." Can an unrequested \$74.4 million grant program truly be sold as an urgent emergency spending needed at this time? I know my colleagues have the highest hopes for the success and safety of our troops and for the speedy recovery of the hurricane-ravaged gulf. But when the American people hear of these special interest riders, they are going to question their priorities, and rightly so.

Again, I would like to refer to this poll. A 39-percent plurality of Americans, in a poll the day before yesterday, say the single most important thing for Congress to accomplish this year is curtailing budgetary earmarks benefiting only certain constituents. This amendment certainly fits that concern that Americans have.

I was going to come back and talk before we voted on this bill. I am sure this amendment will be voted down, again, because others have that are similarly outrageous. But I want to say, we are sending a very bad message to the American people. I saw recent polls showing our approval rating at around 22 percent. I am glad to see that there are now some candidates who are running for office against pork barrel projects and earmarks and museums, taking that out of highway funds.

They are sick and tired of seeing their children's futures mortgaged by this rampant, out-of-control spending.

I will vote against this bill. When the President vetoes it, which I am reasonably confident he will, I will vote to sustain his veto.

I believe that once the President vetoes this bill, the American people will strongly support that veto and that the American people will demand that we bring some kind of sanity to this system where, in the name of recovery from hurricane damage, and in the name of funding the war in Iraq, we spend billions—not millions, not hundreds of millions but billions—on unwanted and unnecessary products.

I want to assure my colleagues that I will support anything to help repair the damage caused by the hurricanes. I will do what is necessary to spend my taxpayers' dollars to fight and win the war in Iraq, which I still strongly believe is a noble cause, but I cannot go back to my constituents in Arizona and say that this is anything but a shameful exercise we are engaged in by taking their tax dollars in the name of an emergency and spending them on those projects, many of which we have discussed and debated at some length.

I ask for the yeas and nays on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, there are some Senators who are in a meeting with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State. We are not going to go to a vote right now because of that conflict with some Senators. But we have an opportunity for those who want to speak on this amendment or any other pending amendment that has not been adequately discussed at this point.

Let me say with regard to the amendment of the Senator from Arizona that I can remember in my State time and time again when we have had severe weather disasters; wet-weather-related disasters. The pecan growers, in particular, would inevitably have a difficult time making a case for the losses they sustained when Federal disasters have been declared and eligibility for Federal assistance had been promised because it is not the kind of program crop, so-called, such as cotton, rice, wheat, corn, that are traditionally supported by Federal programs.

It almost takes someone at the local level who understands yield, production, and how records are kept where the State governments are much better situated in those States to have knowledge and understanding of the crops and of the values of trees and the crops they produce. Peaches is another example. In my part of Mississippi where I grew up, we had a good many peach or-

chards. We had a good many pecan orchards. And those who live in the rural areas of our State traditionally depend upon these crops to help sustain them.

We are talking about not the kind of agriculture that produces millions of dollars of income but small amounts of income to supplement family needs. Workers in the area can move from orchard to orchard volunteering to help harvest these crops.

I can remember as a young boy my grandparents who lived near Utica, MS, would traditionally kind of let the word go throughout the community that they were going to be picking up pecans on a certain day. And some of the workers would come and pick up pecans and in payment would get part of the harvest. That was the payment. Money was short.

We are not talking about wealthy landowners. We are talking about subsistence production in many cases which will qualify for the benefits under this title. If this amendment is approved, they won't get anything.

These funds are going to the States so that at the local level a determination can be made as to the amount of compensation and support those who are disaster victims in these areas of agriculture are entitled to receive.

I am hopeful the Senate will reject this amendment. I just spoke to two parts of it—orchards and the pecan trees—because from my personal experience I know a little bit about that.

But driving through my State after these disasters, I can testify to the widespread damage to orchards, to pine forests on which people depend for their livelihood.

In that part of the State where the storm's destruction was the greatest, there is very little of the traditional large cotton plantation areas. That is not that part of the State. That would be up in the mid to northern part of the State along the Mississippi Delta. That is where the heavy production of cotton is. It may be up in the prairie area of northeast Mississippi and north central Mississippi.

Where this storm's destruction was the heaviest, there are a lot of people who lost pecan orchards, trees, or peach orchards.

Dairy farms were seriously damaged, and dairy is included in this part of the title. Beef cattle production and those things that are grown to sustain those herds of cattle and to feed them were damaged severely.

I am hopeful the Senate will understand that this is not something that the committee made up, either. I am not making this up. These are the facts as I saw them and that I can say to the Senate justify the inclusion of these funds in this bill.

I urge the Senate to reject the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise to join the chairman of the Appropriations Committee to oppose the amendment that has just been offered. Our